

The numbers are too small and the responses generally did not vary enough between campuses to justify a campus-specific breakout. Since this analysis includes only a small sample of the comments, we have redacted all names, even the positive ones, to avoid playing favorites. We encourage interested parties to read the full set of comments posted on the IR page of the Intranet because they contain specific campus or program related issues that we can't fully explore in this analysis. <http://frccweb01/Pages/IRSplash.aspx>.

“What are your main reasons for choosing or continuing at FRCC?”

While the majority of comments came from the open-ended text box at the conclusion of the survey, there were 107 comments associated with the multiple choice question asking why they chose FRCC. The three most popular reasons out of the fixed response choices were location, cost and programs. Their comments elaborated on these choices, with 18% of them mentioning the availability of Online courses.

FRCC's online class offerings that fulfilled my need to remain at home and still take classes.

Online course offerings via FRCC & CCCOnline. Acquiring degree using all online courses was presented as a viable option, and many of my credits from a private university transferred.

In a variety of ways, students mentioned personal experience with staff and instructors as their reason for choosing or continuing with FRCC.

Availability of staff for "walk-in" questions, especially the Science instructors.

[Instructor redacted] is the sole reason that I attend FRCC. His knowledge is amazing.

[Advisor redacted] is so helpful and supportive of my growth as a student and how I can continue on, even when life changed course of what I will have the ability to complete as far as education opportunities.

When I applied I had reservations, but when I talked to some of the staff in the Advising Department, I felt welcome, and not as scared as I thought I would be. :)

FRCC is a "personal school" at FRCC to me I feel like I am at home with caring family. BCC FRCC is not the biggest school, it's the BEST.

FRCC is a high quality of education and ethic. I say this from almost 4 years' experience taking classes at FRCC. Congratulation to your hard work to all FRCC staff for participating in building others lives, helping us be educated in a

responsible and dedicated educational environment. I am having an unforgettable and the most powerful learning experience in my life at FRCC. Thank You.

The availability and quality of specific programs also contributed to students' choice:

I heard math classes were very poorly taught at CSU so I decided I would take as much math at FRCC as possible.

FRCC has one of the best Multimedia programs in the Denver area. FRCC is even ahead of the University of Colorado in many respects, and is much cheaper. Go FRCC!

The closest place to home that offers the interpreting program for a low cost.

General Comments

There were 399 responses to the open-ended question at the end of the survey. The overall tone of comments was fairly evenly split between positive and negative, with many questions sharing both qualities. The four general themes that emerged are entitled **Suggestions, Student Support, the Classroom Experience (including instructors, Courses, Programs, Technology, and other students), and Facilities**. Each theme will be discussed in its own section below.

Suggestions

Students were generous with their suggestions on how FRCC could improve its services. Some repeating themes include:

- Longer hours in support services for students attending at night, such as the cafeteria (or at least hot water and coffee), gym, student success center and at other student service departments;
- More courses online;
- Fewer courses online;
- More bike racks;
- Events to meet other students outside of formal clubs;
- Better advertising of events (Facebook);
- More study space;
- A walking bridge across Harmony;
- RTD passes ;
- Parking, parking, parking. (Nothing good was ever said about parking)

Other respondents had ideas for new or improved programming:

- Courses in Windows 8 and Retailing
- More variety in music lesson/ languages offered;
- More exciting science courses for non-science majors
- Break BIO111 and CEM (sic) into two terms instead of one;

- More Manufacturing opportunities;
- Better equipment in Physics;
- More psychology/welding/interior design courses on other campuses;
- Offer an advanced EMT program;

Student Support

There were 86 comments with some element involving student support. Student Support encompasses a wide range of factors that occur outside of the classroom. It can refer to issues involving advising, financial aid, support staff, and personal emergencies. Since students are more likely to comment on an unsatisfying experience than a satisfying one, 70% of these comments were negative.

The most common types of negative comments centered on advisors giving the wrong advice (either academic or financial aid), unfriendly or rushed staff, and unwieldy enrollment or paperwork processes.

When I met with a counselor regarding classes that I should take, she seemed annoyed that I was a walk in, and rushed me through the process. I recommend making appts mandatory if it is a burden for students to walk in.

Front Range does not set students up for success, it gives them every opportunity to fail. Financial Aid and Administration are redundant and behind the times technologically. They never offer the pertinent information in an easy to understand way, students are expected to be masters of paperwork on their first day of the enrollment process. The staff are mostly unhelpful and the few that are tend to be overworked and under appreciated. Overall if I knew then what I know now I would have either chosen a different school or not gone to school at all. The whole process of enrolling and attending are demoralizing and exhausting.

Students' feelings about the support they received in helping them resolve issues greatly color how they perceive FRCC as a whole. When they felt they had a personal relationship with someone, especially faculty or staff, their overall satisfaction increased significantly. There were some very appreciative gems in these comments, such as:

I would like to say that the Financial Aid Office relieved me of my stress by helping me through the process in detail.

Front Range has exceeded all of my expectations. Friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful staff, wonderful students, and a great education. I'm so happy I chose to go here.

I like the faculty and staff that work here. They have always been friendly and kind and helpful. I want to thank this campus for making me feel welcomed, and cared for since I have been attending! :)

This school is amazing! The staff and other students are extremely helpful and I am glad that my first semester so far has gone so well and i am ready to continue with school

Tutoring with [name redacted] is amazing! The free 1 week tutoring program has been invaluable!!!

As an older student at FRCC this has been one of the greatest points in my life. Having the ability to learn to read and write is something that I had not known. Reading has allowed me to become an active citizen in my community, to understand the needs of my community, so that I may be able to assist others as I have been assisted by FRCC.

September Flood

The record-breaking September floods occurred just a few weeks before this survey was administered. There were several emotional comments concerning the impact of the flood, and FRCC's response to that unfolding disaster. Some students called out individual staff and faculty who helped them through this tragedy (names are redacted because of the many unnamed champions who would be left out by default)

Staff at FRCC in Westminster and Boulder campus are exceptional, [Two Names redacted] at Boulder County campus. [Name redacted] has helped me so much with the personal disaster of the flood and a death in the family close to the same time.

Others asked that the policies be readdressed on how to close the campus in a more timely fashion:

Please reevaluate how or who makes the decision to cancel classes in the case of bad weather, and when the announcement is made. Often times students must choose to not attend class, or drive despite feeling unsafe because FRCC remains open. It is also necessary to make these decisions in a more timely fashion. Many students leave their homes a considerate amount of time before campus opens, and the call is often made later than those who have the first class offered would be leaving. I have been at FRCC for 4 semesters and have seen no improvement on this issue.

Because of the severity of this event, FRCC convened a committee to address internal guidelines that hampered the ability of staff and instructors to respond appropriately in an emergency. This resulted in policy changes such as getting emergency cash quickly to those in need, relaxing rules on administrative withdrawals, and others.

The Classroom Experience

Over half of the comments (219) pertained directly to the classroom experience. This included Instructors, students, courses, programs, and technology.

Instructors

The majority of these comments (127) referred to instructors, with over one-quarter of them (34) containing both positive and negative aspects. These often referred to mainly good experiences with instructors while calling out a single bad experience, such as:

Have had amazing teachers generally, but had one really difficult unresponsive and unhelpful online teacher [name redacted]- online communication challenged. Very unhappy with that experience.

Positive remarks generally called out specific programs or individual faculty for special recognition. A small sample of positive comments includes the following:

[Name redacted] is one of the best instructors I've ever had. He cares - and shows it. You are lucky to have him at FRCC!

All instructors I have had ([4 names redacted] are (without exaggeration) excellent - interesting, clear, knowledgeable, fair, professional, helpful and much above average. I cannot imagine a better learning environment. I should know: I received my B.S. degree in 1970 (UMKC).

I have been blown away by the quality of instruction at FRCC. Small class sizes, professors that care whether you learn the material, accessible professors - I cannot believe what a BARGAIN community college is. Some of the best classes I have ever taken have been at my little local Front Range Community College. Thank you!

Often their appreciation of their instructors contributed greatly to their general satisfaction:

I truly enjoy my education experience with FRCC and look forward to continuing it. Overall I am supremely satisfied with the courses offered, evening classes offered, potency of education, class size, and mostly satisfied with the majority of amazing Instructors!

Front Range has exceeded all of my expectations. Friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful staff, wonderful students, and a great education. I'm so happy I chose to go here.

However, 49 (40%) of classroom-related comments were negative, often mixing in a variety of issues with staff, faculty, and other students into one comment. For instance:

There is to much emphasis being place on Political Correctness and so-called sensitivity, I have been called a racist because I do not agree with the political ideology of the President, but I simply ignored the comment and went about my business. I do not cry to administration because of something like this, I think it

shows a marked since of childish behavior for someone to go crying to the College Administration because they get their feelings hurt, they are supposed to be adults not kindergarten children, it is time that they grow up and act like adults. The same goes for the rest of the Political Correctness being pushed at this and other Colleges and University's. Both Admin and Students need to wake up and smell the coffee, we do not LIVE in a PC world outside of Academia, neither do we live in a sensitive one. The world is a rough place, it is not a school playground.

There were comments referring to the distraction when the discontent of an instructor spills over into the classroom:

I have taken classes at FRCC for 6 semesters and for the most part I have had a positive experience, but I have found that some of the adjuncts have such a terrible attitude about what they are getting paid and the workload they have to take on, it affects their ability to teach. It's quite distracting to a student when we are asking for assistance and getting a complaint about time instead. Class size and pay are the complaints most often expressed and personally I feel that if I went to CSU and paid more for my education it would be worth not having to listen to this type of concern from people we are learning from at FRCC. It's not giving your institution a good reputation.

D2L and other classroom tools received a number of negative comments, especially around the inconsistent instructor training on these technologies

I have taken most of my classes at Front Range through D2L. I strongly feel that for the most part, I end up teaching myself the classes. Yes, my instructors are always involved, and some participate much more than others. However, I can tell that often times the instructors are simply recycling the content from semester to semester, which is to be expected, however, in many cases they fail to update their syllabus to reflect accurate due dates and assignments.

Overall the instruction is good. My main gripe is that there is a VERY LARGE difference in ability level between teachers that are trying you use technology in the classroom like a SmartBoard. There REALLY needs to be better training for this technology to facilitate good instruction and not waste time "learning" how to use the tech properly during class time. [name redacted] is a GREAT EXAMPLE of the level of ability I and many student appreciate in using a SmartBoard system. If I were on the faculty training staff, I would require a certain level of proficiency with this system if the teacher is going to use it. Without it, poor ability with this use of technology is VERY DISTRACTING to say the least, and a poor use of time.

Courses

60 comments (15%) referred specifically to issues with their courses. Seven (12%) of them specifically mentioned the small class size as a positive influence on their FRCC experience:

I greatly appreciate the quality of instruction with the exception of an individual instructor here and there. The longer I am here, the more I appreciate the small classes and the feeling of community that builds over time--I am proud to be a student here! The longer I'm at FRCC, the more I value the small class sizes and "human scale" of education. Keep up the good work and thanks for offering an affordable educational option!

The negative comments mentioned problems with online courses:

I dislike how your online classes are run. They are requiring students to do more work than an on campus class does. Online classes are more expensive, more work, and more stress but they are convenient, and most students who work full time have no choice. Your online instructors are very demanding in terms of time and involvement. Forcing students to have artificial discussion conversations is not learning. These conversations that would not happen in a real life situation. I simply take these classes to allow myself the opportunity to continue working my way through school, but your instructors do not make it easy.

With Cancelled courses:

I have been a little disappointed about having classes cancelled due to lack of enrollment. My Word 2010 class was cancelled last semester--was offered the online option, but the cost of the course was significantly higher, so I didn't take it. I couldn't find anyone to sponsor me for independent study so will probably look for the course at another college or just work through the book on my own.

More courses offered in a classroom setting:

It would be nice if some of the classes that are currently only offered online would be offered in a class setting. Some people don't learn as well from online classes.

More courses offered online or alternate times:

You need more online classes available--especially math classes. It would also be nice to have math classes available as hybrid or weekends. Not everyone can afford to get to class in the evenings during the week, so I have to put my math class off for the time being; until I can figure out how I can work it into my schedule. It would be really beneficial to attend on the weekends or as a hybrid class!!!!

The unavailability of courses:

the class choice is tooooooo limited. ESPECIALLY on the higher end of the courses. I have a difficulty to chose a PHY 211 class due to the shortage of the offer, and a 40+ hours of work. I think maybe you can try to change the time from noon to the morning every other semester. or offer weekend class. thanks

And the difficulty of courses:

A&P 201 sets unrealistic expectations. No person who has responsibilities outside of that one class can possibly succeed in it.

Programs and Degrees

79 (20%) respondents commented on specific programs, including online programming.

Comments included suggestions to expand existing programs to other campuses (specifically interior design, GIS, welding, and machining) or to add new programs such as advanced EMT.

Several students thought their program was outstanding:

Great school. Faculty is exceptional especially in math department. Would recommend and have recommended to anyone interested in continued education after high school. FRCC does a fantastic job and in eternally grateful for the opportunity to further my education through them.

Great School to get as many college credits as you can toward your bachelors and wonderful nursing program it is worth every penny spent.

The EMS education is outstanding because of the staff and instructors selected for the program.

Other students expressed dissatisfaction with their program:

I am unsatisfied with the direction of the nursing programs. The self-directed learning style is not implemented well and I wonder why I'm even in the classroom, and what "instruction" I paying for. The director is a terrible communicator and does not put the best interest of her students first. Comments such as "deal with it" are not supportive. Last minute communication is disrespectful and not supportive of students.

49 specifically mentioned online courses or programs. These ranged from very positive to very negative:

Barring a few exceptions (such as computer classes), regular courses (i.e. non-online / non-hybrid courses) should be kept in the classroom, not online. I avoid classes with an online component for a reason (no access to the internet), so I am upset when I register for physical, non-computer classes and am told I have to use an online book and do all of my coursework online. adding online quizzes, online textbooks, online class schedules, and other features as online-only components to the course makes the courses burdensome. Please consider keeping the required online work to the online courses, and have the physical classes have the option to keep everything on a pencil and paper level. Optional online resources to further enrich our learning are fine (as they're not required),

but filling out online quizzes and assignments are the one major drawback this school has.

I have completed all my classes at FRCC online. I would recommend this type of instruction to those who might not have the time to attend regular classroom classes, but still want a quality education. Thank you for this avenue of learning.

It would be nice if some of the classes that are currently only offered online would be offered in a class setting. Some people don't learn as well from online classes.

Love the online classes, great job!

Please expand the availability of the GIS courses and add an online curriculum for them. Given their popularity I am sure there would be no problem in filling the spaces for attendance. You should also work on getting some seminars into campus

Technology

The issues around technology over-lap with the online component of courses, and comments were predominately negative. However, there were positive components to students experience with technology and an appreciation of what this skill means to their future career:

I'm glad I'm here because I'm learning everything I need to know in my chosen field plus things I need to know just to do business in today's world of high technology.

The Math lab enhanced their learning experience:

The math department is outstanding. Their instructors have made me want to continue my math education even though I met my math requirement 3 semesters ago. The instructors knowledge of mathematics, teaching methods, support through the Math Lab, and love of the subject matter is infectious. I think the department should get credit for taking a subject most people are afraid of and making it interesting and exciting to learn. Thank-you!

And some suggestions for improvement:

I appreciate using the CCCS Online platform this semester for ENVSCI. It is much easier to navigate than the D2L version. Still, there are a lot of things that could be improved. There should be a place where every assignment is in sequential order and you simply down and access all lessons, discussions, etc. off of one page. It would say the start date, due date, and all of that in one place. It is very annoying having to look 3-5 places for content/due date information.

I'm sure it's been said before but it would exceptionally helpful to have an EWolf App or a D2L app to more easily access course information on the go.

D2L received many complaints around how it functions:

I am in my 4th semester at FRCC, Larimer and I love it. My only complaint this semester is with D2L. The online quizzes have not been functioning properly and the same goes for the grading of these quizzes. This has been EXTREMELY FRUSTRATING to have to contact each instructor to fix the grades or modify the quizzes each time to get the proper grade. Either train the instructors on how to use this part of D2L properly or make the quiz setup/process more intuitive. Thank You.

I do not particularly like the D2L website for classes, it is confusing, and unorganized. Also I don't get emails that same day I get them a day after and it's hard to tell when things are due.

I wish that the D2L interfaces of FRCC & CCCOnline were more similar. It seems to me that CCCO has more functionality available than FRCC. Also, the varying degrees/functionality of various Pearson MyLabs interfaces/availability is inconsistent, too. Why enable some features for some courses but not others?

Auxiliary Services: Facilities, Parking, Food Services, Bookstore, Library

57 (14%) comments referred to auxiliary services. 14 (25%) of them had either a positive or a neutral component, such as offering suggestions for improvements. However, the majority were negative, focusing on problems with parking, rude customer service, and poor food.

Suggestions included longer hours at the Library or cafeteria, textbooks on Kindle, more study space in the cafeteria and library, water bottle stations, RTD passes, increase lighting in the parking lots, and add traffic cops. Or a truly smoke free outdoor area:

I would really like a non smoking out door area. Somewhere with shade and tables and enforced non smoking. Somewhere to eat lunch where I don't have to deal with smokers..

There were satisfied customers:

The food in cafeteria is good and the staff is great, but the prices keep seeming to get higher and higher.

But there were more dissatisfied customers:

On bookstore: overpriced, sometimes unfriendly service, and refusal to return books even when left in casing! I do not use their services unless I absolutely have to. FRCC teachers and help centers are (overall) wonderful!

The cafeteria needs to lower prices and make fries or salad included with lunch

The area of Front Range that could use the most improvement is the staffing of the front desk and the cafeteria. Many from both areas have had negative attitudes

and could affect a person's overall mood to become negative as well due to the employees. Besides these two areas my experience at Front Range has been very pleasant.

And all campuses suffered from parking complaints:

The parking at the Larimer campus is terrible. It literally takes me nearly 15 minutes to get from my car to the classroom as I have to park out in the farthest lots and my class is in Sunlight Peak at the farthest side of campus. I really hate the parking!

BCC really needs to do something about their parking situation. I have to arrive for class a half an hour early just to find a spot a good quarter mile away.

Your design for the new parking lot is poorly thought out and is not helping the driving situation in the parking lot.

Follow-up

While the 461 students who left written comments in this survey represent only 2% of the Fall 2013 student population, their reoccurring themes highlight areas of celebration, as well as areas in need of improvement.

FRCC has shown its commitment to respond quickly and appropriately to student concerns, sometimes by changing policies, and other times by communicating explanations of why some policies are in place.

There have been several policy changes in response to weather-related concerns such as the FRCC Department of Campus Security and Preparedness taking a more proactive role to incorporate weather monitoring and situational awareness into their daily routines.. In addition, FRCC's leadership has moved back their conference call to 5AM in order to make more timely decisions about campus closures on predicted bad-weather days. But despite everyone's best intentions, weather can have a localized impact that no one can predict.

Financial aid advisors received many negative comments. While some students had valid grievances, often these were based on misunderstandings founded in the complexity of the Federal Student Aid mandates. Many complaints were actually disputes with Higher One policies that the financial aid department has no control over. The financial aid department has enhanced their communication efforts to explain these particulars to students, but often students may not be satisfied with what the advisors have to tell them if it means they aren't getting the money they need.

There will always be a gap in students' understanding of all the work going on behind the scenes to help and support them. However, better communication and a trend toward encouraging more interpersonal relationships could help to close that gap.

The diversity in our student body means there is no single solution that will suit everyone's needs. The variety of our instructors, staff, and instructional methodologies all contribute to the larger whole that creates FRCC, and as so many of our students said in a variety of ways,

"thanks for the numerous opportunities".